

Message Text

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44

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01

SAJ-01 /057 W

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R 190906Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3528

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 6795

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, RP, US CB

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED.

1. EXCEPT FOR SEC. ROMULO, GOP OFFICIALS HAVE HAD NO PUBLIC COMMENT ON US HANDLING OF MAYAGUEZ. PRESS REPORTS ROMULO SAID SOMEWHAT PETULANTLY IN KL THAT U.S. ACTION CAME AT BAD TIME SINCE HE AND HIS ASEAN COLLEAGUES DISCUSSING PEACE IN THE REGION.

2. THERE HAVE BEEN ONLY TWO EDITORIALS ON INCIDENT. MAY 18 EXPRESS PIECE "LESSONS FROM MAYAGUEZ" NOTES THAT THAILAND IS NOW "CHURNING WITH INDIGNATION" AND THIS IS ANOTHER SIGN THAT "AMERICAN LEADERS HAVE ONCE MORE MISREAD THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES." EDITORIALIST SUGGESTS INCIDENT MAKES REVIEW OF US BASES IN PHILIPPINES IMPERATIVE. "MAYAGUEZ IS A LESSON WE SHOULD NOT FORGET. AND, AT A TIME WHEN ASIAN NATIONS ARE ON THE THRESHOLD OF FORMING A REGION OF PEACE, CONFIDENTIAL

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THE FLAGRANT DISCOURTESY--TO SAY THE LEAST--SMACKS OF THE

AMERICAN IMPERIALISM OF OLD." ORIENT NEWS EDITORIAL OF MAY 19 "THE MAYAGUEZ INCIDENT" ARGUES US IS STILL SUPER POWER AND NEED NOT PROVE ITS MACHISMO. AMERICAN MUST "GIVE ASIAN NATIONS THEIR DUE" BY TREATING THEIR INDIVIDUAL SOVEREIGNTY WITH RESPECT. THE EDITORIAL CONCLUDES: "EVERY-THING CONSIDERED, IT WAS THE US WHO BEHAVED CRUDELY IN THE MAYAGUEZ INCIDENT."

3. BULLETIN'S BATALLA INTERPRETED INCIDENT AS SIGNAL OF US DETERMINATION TO CONTINUE PLAYING ITS POLICEMAN ROLE. BULLETIN'S VALENCIA WROTE CAMBODIA LEARNED ITS LESSON THE HARD WAY AND THAT AFTER HAVING TO EAT SO MUCH HUMBLE PIE IN CAMBODIA AND VIETNAM, THE US "CAN'T AFFORD TO BE PUSHED AROUND ANY MORE." TIMES JOURNAL COLUMNIST E.A. CRUZ CLAIMED CAMBODIAN ACTION IN SEIZING SHIP WAS NOT ACT OF PIRACY AND THAT MANY PEOPLE NOT ONLY FELLOW ASIANS WERE ON THE CAMBODIAN SIDE IN THIS AFFAIR.

4. THERE WERE A NUMBER OF POLITICAL CARTOONS ON INCIDENT. IN FIRST DAYS OF EVENT CARTOONS STRESSED DANGER TO PEACE THAT MAYAGUEZ INCIDENT REPRESENTED. CARTOONS IN TODAY'S (MAY 19) TJ, HOWEVER, IS MORE REFLECTIVE OF EDITORIAL LINE IN EXPRESS AND ORIENT NEWS. IT SHOWS HEAVILY ARMED AMERICAN SOLDIER ANGRILY POINTING HIS FINGER AT A SMALL FIGURE (LABELED CAMBODIA) HOLDING EMPTY SLING SHOT. AMERICAN HAS MARK ON HELMET WHICH IS LABELED "MAYAGUEZ CAPTURE". CARTOON IS ENTITLED "BIG JOE IS SORE". BUT THIS BALANCED BY CARTOON IN MAY 19 EXPRESS WHICH SHOWS CAMBODIAN IMPALED BY ARTILLERY SHELL TELLING KHMER ROUGE GOVERNMENT "BAD NEWS, COMRADE, THE UNITED STATES IS STILL ALIVE AND WELL." END UNCLASSIFIED.

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5. COMMENT: GIVEN FILIPINO NATIONAL CHARACTER, WE SUSPECT MOST PEOPLE HERE VIEWED DECISIVE AMERICAN ACTION IN RE-CLAIMING MAYAGUEZ AND RESCUING ITS CREW POSITIVELY. GOP, HOWEVER, COULD BE INTERESTED IN PLAYING UP THAI ANGER AT ALLEGEDLY CAVALIER TREATMENT BY USG BECAUSE OF ITS POTENTIAL RELEVANCE TO BASE TALKS WITH US. DESPITE
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POSSIBLE INTEREST IN EXPLOITING MAYAGUEZ INCIDENT, GOP'S REACTION AS EXPRESSED IN THE MEDIA SO FAR HAS BEEN RATHER MILD.
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SULLIVAN

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